

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 IO-13 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

TRSE-00 DHA-02 ACDA-07 EB-07 NRC-05 OES-07

FEAE-00 ERDA-05 /108 W

-----035293 131302Z /46

O R 131208Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2816

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7172

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: POLITICAL SITUATION - BHUTTO AT CENTER STAGE

1. IN A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS, BHUTTO SUPPORTER AND FORMER FEDERAL AGRARIAN MINISTER CHAUDHRY ANWAR AZIZ REPORTED THAT HE HAD A TWENTY MINUTE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER ON JULY 12. ANWAR SAID THAT BHUTTO WAS VERY PLEASED WITH THE "SENTIMENTS OF LOVE AND AFFECTION" FOR HIM THAT WERE BEING EXPRESSED BY THE PEOPLE. IN FIRST INDICATION THAT BHUTTO PLANS TO CONTEST
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ELECTIONS, ANWAR ALSO SAID THAT THE FORMER PM WAS CONFIDENT THAT HE WOULD SOON BE APPEARING BEFORE THE "COURT OF THE PEOPLE." BHUTTO ALSO CALLED ON PARTY WORKERS TO "KEEP UP MORALE" SINCE ELECTIONS ARE "ONLY 85 DAYS AWAY."

2. IN THE MEANTIME FORCES ARE BUILDING WHICH WANT TO DEPRIVE BHUTTO OF AN OPPORTUNITY TO RUN IN THE

NEXT ELECTION. AT A MEETING WITH NEWSPAPER EDITORS ON JULY 11 GENERAL ZIA WAS ASKED WHETHER HE WAS GOING TO INVESTIGATE BHUTTO'S PAST ACTIVITIES. ZIA REPLIED THAT HE WOULD AND PLANNED ON HAVING THE FINDINGS PRESENTED TO THE NEXT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. WHEN THE QUESTIONER CONTINUED TO PRESS ZIA, EXPLAINING THE DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN NOT RELEASING THE FINDINGS UNTIL THE NEW ASSEMBLY CONVENED, ZIA REPORTEDLY REPLIED THAT HE WOULD CONSIDER TAKING ACTION AGAINST THE FORMER PM EVEN BEFORE ELECTIONS. THIS EXCHANGE IS INDICATIVE OF THE DILEMMA ZIA FACES GROWING LARGELY OUT OF THE MYTHOLOGY THAT SURROUNDS BHUTTO. WHILE MOST POLITICAL OBSERVERS FEEL THAT THE FORMER PM'S POLITICAL FUTURE HAS BEEN SEVERELY DAMAGED AND THAT HE FACES AN UPHILL BATTLE IF HE IS ALLOWED TO RUN FOR OFFICE AGAIN, NO ONE SEEMS PREPARED TO COUNT HIM OUT AS AN IMPORTANT FORCE IN PAKISTANI POLITICS. ACTIONS THAT A RENASCENT BHUTTO MAY TAKE AGAINST THOSE WHO OPPOSE HIM IS ENGENDERING CONCERN AMONG SOME OF THE LIKELY TARGETS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF ZIA DOES ACT TO REMOVE BHUTTO FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE, HE WILL BE MAKING THE KIND OF FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL DECISION WHICH HE HAS SWORN TO AVOID AND WHICH MOST OBSERVERS FEEL HE STILL WANTS TO AVOID.

3. MUFTI MAHMUD, IN A PHONE CONVERSATION JULY 12, REPORTEDLY TOLD SOME SUPPORTERS THAT HE WELCOMED THE INTRODUCTION OF A SYSTEM OF ISLAMIC PUNISHMENT FOR SOCIAL
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CRIMES. REACTION TO THE MORE SEVERE PUNISHMENTS RANGE FROM THE URBAN BOURGEOISIE WHO THINK THEY ARE ABHORRENT TO THE ORTHODOX RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS WHO HAVE APPLAUDED THE MOVE.

4. WHILE THE GENERAL ABSENCE OF POLITICAL COMMENTARY SINCE THE MILITARY TAKEOVER HAS ALSO MEANT THAT THE ANTI-AMERICAN THEME HAS BEEN LARGELY DORMANT, THERE HAVE BEEN A FEW INCIDENTS OF ANTI-AMERICANISM IN RECENT DAYS. IN THE ANWAR AZIZ/BHUTTO CONVERSATION, IN A LIKELY PREVIEW OF A PPP CAMPAIGN THEME, BHUTTO REPORTEDTLY TOLD ANWAR THAT SOME POWERS WISH TO DISMEMBER PAKISTAN AND, IN VIEW OF THIS, HE HAD DONE EVERYTHING HE COULD TO REACH A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITH THE PNA BUT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL. AN ARTICLE IN THE JULY 8TH EDITION OF MASHREQ, AN URDU LANGUAGE PRESS TRUST NEWSPAPER, WELCOMED GENERAL ZIA'S STATEMENT THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ALTER PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY. THE ARTICLE ADDS PAKISTAN IS A SINCERE MEMBER OF THE THIRD WORLD'S CRUSADE AGAINST EXPLOITATION BY THE INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES. COMMENTING ON THE NUCLEAR REPROCESSING ISSUE AND PAKISTAN'S ASSURANCE THAT THE FACILITY WILL NOT BE USED FOR MILITARY PURPOSES, THE

ARTICLE CONCLUDES THAT, "IF SOMEONE IS NOT READY TO ACCEPT
THIS ASSURANCE, ITS INTENTION IS TO KEEP PAKISTAN DEPRIVED
OF MODERN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY, WHICH NO PAKISTANI CAN ACCEPT."
HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, POLITICAL SITUATION, ELECTIONS, REMOVAL FROM OFFICE
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 13-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ISLAMA07172
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770249-0200
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770763/aaaaccpv.tel
Line Count: 120
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 76fd576c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1880585
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL SITUATION - BHUTTO AT CENTER STAGE
TAGS: PINT, PK, (BHUTTO, ALI), (ZIA UL-HAQ, MOHAMMAD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/76fd576c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009